UNDER THE WEATHER

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BY

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INTRODUCTION

THESE casual vagaries were perpetrated while I was somewhat "under the weather," or, shall I say, "below par," after an operation. They provided me with a mild anaesthetic or analgesic to calm down frequent incursions of neuralgia, even if not to rout them altogether.

They have little other value, I fear, than the service they have been rendering to me, though each is true for me in its own way. But I share them with my readers, just out of friendship. I do not think that any of them are depressing,

or I should not have allowed them the light of print, especially in these days of acute shortage of paper, though fortunately not of lending or purchasing power, as witness the War Loans and the stupendous purchases by authorities of various shapes and sizes.

Under the Weather is offered as a gentle soporific to distract attention awhile from the many things that really matter.

The ingredients of *Under the Weather* definitely do not matter and thus may be a welcome little change from the things that do.

G. S. A.

P.S. Am I, after all, so much *Under the Weather* as the title suggests? My readers will decide.

ILLNESS THE REGENERATOR

AN illness, if reasonably long, obviously has a twofold purpose—first the purpose of a lesson of some kind, of a karmic adjustment, second, the purpose of helping to reorient to Reality the suffering individual. An illness should change him, at first even unconsciously to himself, while he is lying in bed like a log, perhaps oblivious of his surroundings and under the pressure of suffering. As health slowly returns, the fruits of his unconscious Yoga

will come consciously within his grasp and he will see unveil before him new ideas, new ideals, new goals.

All this if under normal circumstances he is ardently seeking for these, ever restless until some intimation of them rewards him by its approach. Suffering only changes if during health there is a desire for change.

If an individual goes down into the valley of the shadow of suffering, or even into the valley of the shadow of death itself, in some spirit of habitual venture-someness, of peace and confidence, he will emerge from it changed, and this is what everything that happens to him should achieve—be it of joy or of pain, be it of defeat or of victory.

Normally, we are only too likely to see life as through a glass darkly, but in the purifying and searching benediction of an illness we shall, for a time at least, see it face to face. Or we shall see face to face some aspect of it with which we happen to be concerned.

Illness is revealing. Illness is clarifying. Illness adjusts us more closely to Truth.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVING gone through a certain amount of illness, having "lain recumbent on a bed of suffering," I have been brought into touch with some of the essentials of Life, and with the immense benefits these can confer upon people who are suffering.

While I was suffering I did not want any erudite discourses on the intellectual meaning of suffering. I wanted to be mothered, fathered, brothered; I wanted active commiseration; I wanted to be soothed, even patted on the back, in the

most loving manner ; I wanted sympathy and understanding. Perhaps these are the finest and most beautiful things we can at any time give to anybody.

My wish, as the experience of my own particular illness, is that I may gradually come to the close of my life by living simply in the real sense of the term. It does not mean living on unappetizing food and lying on the bare floor. These have nothing to do with simplicity. It is the simplicity of attitude, of outlook, of kindliness, which cannot help being aroused to meet the needs of all.

If we were all real people, we should even physically feel the suffering of others. Their sorrow would have a peculiar reality in ourselves.

Through suffering we may appreciate and realize and rejoice in the Universal Brotherhood more than perhaps we have ever done before. I should like to challenge myself and every one who has had an illness: Have you, from one point of view, rejoiced in it, has it meant much unfoldment to you? It should. Perhaps we do know that we suffer from ourselves. But do we know that we suffer in part that we may draw nearer to our fellow-creatures in deeper understanding? Suffering is a road to the understanding of others.

TRAVELLING

I AM very fond of travelling, provided I can travel as I want to travel. Emphatically, as a general rule, I do not want to arrive. It is not reaching a place that intrigues me. There is very much about arriving that is exceedingly tiresome. There is the condition of dirt in which one arrives. There is the crowd waiting to receive one and the conversation between us which good arrival manners and good receiving manners require. There is the collecting of the luggage which always takes an interminable time, and one is

always afraid lest in the confusion of arrival some of it may be lost, especially if some kind and utterly incompetent welcomer offers to look after it. There is the settling down in some place most affectionately and impossibly arranged with every possible inconvenience. There is the attention to be paid to the influx of visitors as we arrive to settle down, and to their speedy dispersal. There is the food which is sure to be late and cold, but served in the most hospitable manner possible. And there is often the late arrival of the train itself which disturbs all the arrangements. And then . . . . but why dilate ?

I do not like arriving, but I do like travelling, provided I am able to travel

with choice companions, so that I may travel cosily. With strangers, no. Emphatically no !

The class of travel? I do not much care, provided my cronies and I occupy the whole compartment, and that the sanitary arrangements are as good as can be expected in these uncivilized times. Dust and noise? Yes, these are a nuisance. But the travelling makes up for them, except when we reach a station and are subject to the rattle of the door-handles by people whose eyes are too myopic to perceive the labels "Reserved" which I insist on being affixed to both doorways of the compartment before departure.

Of course, travelling in these days is a horrible degradation to the traveller, and

I only travel when I must, not avoiding it for the war's sake, but travelling because there is no other alternative.

Pure travelling would be one of my most perfect joys if only I had never to arrive.

I suppose that living is pure travelling, for we do not arrive anywhere much. Even death is only a junction.

There is the ever-changing landscape to delight the eyes, the ever-changing colours and forms.

There are the wonderful changes from night to dawn, from dawn to actual sunrise, from sunrise to noonday and early afternoon heat—perhaps the less said about this the better, and then come the marvellous changes from the lessening heat of the day to the beginnings of

mysterious dusk when the scenery becomes softened and the sun sets gloriously over fields and rivers and hills and mountains : all too speedily in these tropical regions, for a moment lighting up the workers and their animals as they walk along some pathway to a village just to be seen in the far distance, and then blotting them out.

And thus the landscape fades into night, and only flickering lights are here and there visible.

What a peace and tranquillity reign over the earth. How far away one travels from the ugliness of town and city, from the relentless pressure of human propinquity and from all other conditions of juxtaposition.

One travels through another world, a real world, a world of peace and stillness, of nearness to God in the company of others —animals, simple-minded peasants, growing produce, waving trees and flowers— near to God as these have been from time immemorial.

Arriving is to awaken from rest into all the confusions of the outer world. But travelling is rhythmic rest.

There is the harmonizing rhythm of the engine as it pulls its load, and of the carriage wheels as they beat inspiring time over sleepers and rails. This rhythm itself sets up rhythm in one's being and compelling music is created to stir to noble thoughts and deeds. In travelling I can be lazy yet intensely active, and I can feel

and think and will, and even sing and speak, as otherwise is impossible.

While I travel, and especially as the fierceness of noonday life gives way to the softening influences of the afternoon, I am able to enter regions of bliss and inspiration shut off from me under most other conditions. I know the Universal Brotherhood of Life and the Glory of God, the Beauty and Simplicity of living, as I never know them save under the magic of travelling.

For my Devachan there will be perpetual travelling, for I shall be perpetually travelling. But I shall never arrive!

What an anti-climax is this arriving! From the sublime to the sordid! From the Real to the unreal! From peace to

tumult ! From languorous ease to stabbing discomfort.

Obviously, just a night's journey is no travelling at all, nor just a night and a day. Three or four nights and days are the minimum prescription for real travelling, and even then. . . .

The trains I most like are the great international expresses of Europe, the splendid transcontinental trains in the United States which carry one nearly without a break from New York to the West Coast. In India, too, there are one or two passable trains, but there is little comfort about them, little occasion for the creative relaxation of travelling.

And the snag always lies in the journey's end. We simply have to arrive, so that

the constant thought of arriving enters like a poison into what might otherwise be the pure delight of travelling.

Is it worth while to travel at all? I suppose so, for even the darkness of arriving cannot entirely dissipate the sunshine of travelling, when one does travel at all.

I am almost saying that arrival should be eliminated from the evolutionary process—world without end, Life everlasting, perpetual motion, and so forth. In a way there is no ending, only perpetual travelling, with occasional rests in self-appointed rest-houses. This suits me. But there is just one arrival which I must concede—arrival from travelling in suffering. I know what excellent apologies are made for suffering, and how it is sought to show that there is

really no suffering at all. I have often said all this myself, and no doubt it is true.

But I am not a sufferer either by nature or by inclination. I am no self-mutilator. And when I have to travel through suffering I surely want to arrive as quickly as possible. And if for any other reason I have to arrive at all, let me arrive quickly and have done with it.

P.S. Travelling by ship is, of course, far less wonderful than travelling by train. One is much too near one's fellow creatures, even though there be compensation in quiet seas and wonderful sun-risings and sun-settings. On board a ship one lives almost as in a dungeon, with nose appalled by odours and ears devastated by sounds; and escape is impossible.

KNOWLEDGE AND SIGHT

"Faith will vanish into sight."
. . . Bishop C. Wordsworth
(Hymns Ancient and Modern)

IT is curious that with all my Theosophy, and I have, I think, a reasonable amount, I cannot help feeling very sorry for an individual who passes away. I ought to know better, for I ought to know that he or she has passed away from suffering into peace and happiness. I do know this, and I cannot help saying so. I cannot help saying that it is a happy release, and of course it is. But

a vein of sadness runs through me—"Poor thing. Still, the pain and suffering are now over." I wonder if sometimes I feel more sorry for the individual who has gone than for those who are left. It is these apparently abandoned ones who really need all my heartfelt sympathy, for their suffering continues even more poignantly when the other suffering ends, and it is beyond their power—save as a pious hope—to rejoice that a suffering is over, so great is their misery, so drowned are they in a despairing condition which seems unending.

Of course, if we all could know that we have not lost those near and dear to us when they pass from our sight, that death has no power over love, then, while

we should still bemoan the loss of the physical form—and indeed is it a loss—we should consciously continue our comradeship with our loved ones, only somewhat otherwise. And we should soon become accustomed to the " otherwise."

But we do not know, even though there may now and then be cases of remembrance, of knowledge, which help, even though rarely do they entirely satisfy. And this ignorance of ours causes all the suffering and all the misery. It does not, however, justify any sorrow for those who have departed, except in so far as there lurks in us—despite all the teachings of every religion and above all of Theosophy—the feeling that it is better to be in physical incarnation than

anywhere else, and that a bird in the hand is better than any number of birds in any number of bushes, or that it is better to be where there are joys as well as sorrows than to fly elsewhere to places about which one knows nothing—all revelations notwithstanding.

And then we have the overwhelming calamity of there apparently being no means of communication between this place and that. To be shut off after there has for so long been some means of communication or other is a final blow, again all asseverations that there *are* means of communication notwithstanding.

I can most heartily understand the woe of those who, despite all assurances and teachings which they may believe in the

abstract and until the time comes for their acid testing, sink helplessly and hopelessly beneath inflictions which they know must come to all, but for which they themselves are utterly unprepared and for very long will remain unprepared.

Only time can give them some reconciliation, as well as, perhaps, an increasing acceptance of the truth about that which we call death.

Fortunately, truth belongs to us in all its fullness even though we may still not be in possession of our heritage—only in very partial possession at the most. Thus truth must essentially be congenial to us. We cannot help having both instinctive and intuitive inclination to Truth. Truth cannot be hidden from us indefinitely. Little

by little Truth will take the place of ignorance, and experience will slowly but surely dissipate fear and loneliness.

We shall see that death is a friend and not a foe, that he helps and never hinders. Alas that he should be regarded by one and all as Public Enemy No. 1. Rather is he Universal Friend No. 1. But ignorance establishes him otherwise, and his very name reeks of the horror and fear with which we have invested it from time immemorial.

And here am I hard and fast in the universal rut of ignorance, thinking and feeling about death in the most conventional way, knowing that death is Public Friend No. 1 and yet almost treating him as if he were Public Enemy No. 1. I feel sorry for the object of his visitation,

when I should be thankful for his visit of friendship.

But it is this ignorance which does al the mischief. Why did we start on this voyage of evolutionary discovery in a state of complete ignorance, and why have we achieved so infinitesimal a conquest over ignorance after all these millennia of seeking ?

We almost seem to suffer more than ever, and the good old days as we call them would appear to be exceedingly well named.

Still, there is no call to pessimism. With all our terrible cruelties and ugliness I suppose we are somehow or other slowly ascending the spiral of enlightenment, with Theosophy and The Theosophical

Society in the van to help to hasten us on our halting way.

Theosophy and The Theosophical Society are indeed the world's Godsends, for The Society holds up before the world the Truth of all Truths—the Universal Brotherhood of humanity, which Truth it might have made truer still by declaring the Universal Brotherhood of all Life.

Theosophy gives to the world the truths about its most insistent problems, those the non-solution of which gives rise to all the pain and suffering afflicting us all with hardly a single exception. But Theosophy does even more than this, for the Science instructs us that we can know these truths through first-hand experience. We can and must know them for ourselves. And

we are shown how to achieve such experience, by what processes of meditation, Yoga, investigations of all kinds, intuitional researches, and how to make our experiments safe, wise, direct.

Yet few even among professed Theosophists embark upon a career of experimental Theosophy as indeed they should if they desire to profit from their acquaintance with the Science.

The fact is that we have been mainly absorbed in the purely intellectual aspect of Theosophy and in certain general practical aspects which directly induce comfort, courage and a clearer understanding of the meaning of Life.

We have been content with abstract explanations of Life rather than with the

deeper, concrete experiences of Life under one or another of the great sections of Theosophy. Yet Theosophy gives both. It confronts us with both, and also shows us how to become Masters of Life instead of remaining slaves of Life.

But no Theosophist can run through the gamut of all experiences, not even, I would venture to say, if he has reached a very high level of evolution. As for us, we can only explore very superficially in a direction or two, and perhaps gain some distorted view of the general landscape.

What then can we experience of the nature of death ? We can only have something of a working hypothesis, unconfirmed by experience.

Thus do I come back to the theme with which I started, that I feel very sorry for an individual who has passed over. I said I ought to know better. Perhaps I do know better. But I have not yet made my knowledge good in experience, and so the knowledge falters and leaves me in the lurch. If only I could say that I have seen what happens at death, that I have seen how happy is the individual to whom death has ministered, that I have seen how he who has departed and those who have been left behind are still united in fact even if not in appearance, and will be united for ever if they so choose! If only I could say that I have seen, that I have more than knowledge—sight!

But I cannot, though I may have seen other truths. Ignorance still refuses to give way to knowledge, though an inferior foe indeed compared with sight which is the final conqueror of all ignorance.

So I feel sorry when I ought to feel glad, and when I should be able to impart my gladness to those who have no gladness at all.

Still, I know, and I hope that from knowledge to sight will be but a short distance when the time comes for sight to begin to awaken.

Let me anticipate. Let me feel glad and joyous with the departed, and out of these cause the gloom of the lonely ones to be somewhat lifted.

LAUGHTER

MANY of you have seen that most fascinating portrait by Rembrandt called "The Laughing Cavalier." This Cavalier is one of my deities. I worship him and wish he had many more devotees than he has at present. Being a Cavalier, presumably of the swashbuckling type, he must often have held his sides in laughter. It may not be quite the thing to laugh so much that you have to hold your sides. But there is nothing more health-giving or virtue-compelling than laughter.

And understand that by laughter I do not mean giggling, nor do I mean a constant state of laughter on the slightest provocation or on no provocation at all. Some people I know begin to laugh even when I am trying to tell them something really serious and solemn. There is a time for seriousness, but there is also a time for laughter, and I would even go so far as to say that it is all the better if laughter sometimes encroaches on seriousness.

I have said that I do not include giggling in laughter, but I emphatically include smiling in laughter. Smiling is the first stage on the way to laughter. We may not be able to get any further than the smile, but the smile is infinitely worthwhile both to ourselves and to those around us.

I regard laughter, and the smile in lesser degree, as the resolver of most of our troubles. The moment we are able to laugh at a trouble, the trouble skulks away with its tail between its legs. The trouble may be of any kind. It may be personal suffering, in which case laughter is *de rigeur.* If it is the suffering of another or the trouble of another, actual laughter may be out of place, but an encouraging smile is very distinctly in place. If I am unwell, I like to see smiling, but not necessarily laughing, people around me. A friend of mine once diminished my suffering from an aching tooth by heartily laughing at the inflammation it caused and the consequent distortion of my face. He was so much

amused that I began to have to be amused with him. But he did not stop short at smiling. He laughed heartily, even though I have no memory of his holding his sides.

The kind of face I like to see is the face with sunshine in it, or should I rather say that the kind of face I like to see is a sunrise face, ever ready to shine more and more as opportunity offers. A solemn, cloudy face gives the presage of rain, which is to say that I could easily be moved by it to tears. I want to see faces round me in which is lurking some kind of delight, ready to spread all over the face at the slightest provocation.

To me, laughter is of the essence of the Science of Theosophy. The Science

of Theosophy must mean little to us save as it causes us to take life with ever-increasing happiness and joy and hope, all of which mean to me, a laughing of our way through life. Of course, there are occasions when laughter is relegated to the attic while sadness reigns in the rest of the house. If we knew our Theosophy as we ought to know it, there should be smiles everywhere, even if not laughter. But I quite candidly confess that I have by no means yet reached this stage. The King of Sorrow and Sadness has not yet finished with me, and the King of Laughter has not yet finally entered me upon the rolls of his citizens. Still, I laugh as much as I can, and I will say this, that Theosophy helps me to

laugh, to take life easily, to be satisfied with what happens to me, and to be cheerful in the service of those who may be enwrapped in gloom. Laughter must run through the lives of us all—music-laughter, of course. Giggling and cacophonous laughter is no laughter at all. Such "laughter" is sound gone wrong.

But I notice that in the inner regions where the Masters dwell, smiling and laughter have flowered into a beautiful serenity. I think the Masters do laugh sometimes, and, unless They have occasion to be stern, They constantly smile. But I suppose it is this beautiful serenity of calm and assured peace that is the apotheosis of the smile and of the laugh.

May I not, perhaps, say that we must smile and laugh our way towards this noble serenity, and that so long as the smile and the laugh are as the music of Nature, always a blessing, never a contempt, we may be sure that we are moving in the right direction? On the other hand, he who rarely smiles and rarely laughs has yet much to learn in order to travel more quickly on his pathway. Light-hearted living, which is next-door to smile-living and laughter-living, is essential to Theosophical living.

Let us laugh awhile, be serious awhile, and often smile. So shall we help to make Universal Brotherhood a living force in our own lives and in the lives of others.

WHO GOES SLOWLY GOES SANELY

DO not hurry. Be deliberate. Begin in good time.

Look where you are going.

Take time to look at everything which is on your way.

Take note of all that seems good to you.

Take note of all that seems ill to you.

Consider what you can do to make the good better and the ill good.

You have much more time than you think you have for many more things.

This is a "no time" world which must change into a "plenty of time" world.

With whatever you see around you try to identify yourself, so that you may know that there are others living their lives as you are living yours.

What is the outlook of a blade of grass, of a flower, a shrub, a tree?

What is the outlook of the earth in which these grow?

What is the outlook of a pebble?

Take your time to enter into the spirit of these, and do not be afraid of coming to wrong conclusions. Only on the basis of a less will you be able to build a more. And do not be afraid to imagine.

Imagination is sometimes a bridge between a less and a more.

Of course, smile along your way.

And when you reach your destination, live slowly and deliberately in it.

WHAT IS WRONG? WHAT IS RIGHT?

WRONG-doing is less doing. Right-doing is more doing.

The wrong-doer is he who is doing less, not necessarily less than he might be expected to do.

Contrasted with him is the right-doer who is doing more, not necessarily more than he might be expected to do.

There are grades of the less as there are grades of the more.

The wrong-doer is below the accepted standards of doing.

The right-doer at least reaches the accepted standards.

Hence the wrong of today may have been the right of yesterday, while the right of today may be the wrong of tomorrow.

Right and wrong are not final terms, but relative and temporary terms. We know nothing about absolute right and wrong, being so very relative ourselves.

So, before appraising anyone, we should try to know his own right and wrong as well as the conventional right and wrong. We have guardedly to use the phrases: "He ought to know better" and "he cannot be expected to know better."

APHORISMS

AS I have been brooding and dreaming during my illness, I seem to have acquired a peculiar tendency to write down ideas that occur to me, little nothings from one point of view but little somethings from my point of view, in terms of aphorisms. They are like sharp little chisels to cut away ignorances here and there. Anyhow, they help me and perhaps they may help others, although to each his own aphorisms.

1. *The more we fight for both sides, the sooner shall we achieve Victory.*

We have to fight so that the Right triumphs no less in the defeated than in the victorious. There cannot be any one-sided Victory, with the defeated side left out. So, even when we fight for the Allied cause we must fight so that the Right may the sooner triumph among the Axis powers. We must be able to feel, therefore, that we are fighting on both sides, with one purpose.

2. *The more we lose, the more we find.*

Shri Krishna has wonderfully put this : "When I have stripped a man of everything, then I give him Myself." It is very true to say that only as we become unattached to anything are we able to become attached to all things.

3. *The nearer we come to Heaven, the more lovable becomes the earth.*

The earth is really a lovable place, but only when we perceive its heavenly qualities. After all, Heaven is everywhere ; as much on earth as it is in Heaven. The more we emphasize the Heaven-spirit, the more does earth become heavenly.

4. *The greater the sorrow, the richer the blessing.*

It is difficult for us to realize, when we suffer tremendously, that there is compensation in a corresponding blessing. Where God inflicts, there He strengthens. But unfortunately, most of us can only see the infliction. We are too blind to see the benediction.

5. *The more we forgive him who injures, the more we remember his virtues.*

To ignore the injuries someone may inflict upon us is to be able to perceive the good qualities he has. There is no one without good qualities, and these stand out remarkably when we cease to concentrate upon his weaknesses.

6. *The more we are childlike, the less are we childish.*

Childishness is the ignorance of childhood. But to be childlike is to be beautifully and wonderfully young.

7. *The truer our happiness, the wider our friendship.*

Happiness makes friends. No one can be friendless who has happiness.

8. *The deeper the love, the nobler the life.*

Love is always the nobility of Life. A nobleman is one who knows how to love. An aristocrat is one who knows how to love.

9. *The older we grow, the younger we become.*

Youth is the purpose of growth, for there is no greater perfection than the spirit and form of Youth. As we grow older, even in years, we must continually be translating all that we learn into terms of youthfulness, ardour, enthusiasm, forth-going.

10. *The more we die, the less we change.*

Death is change, but to the end that we may become unchanging, save to be

more. Death is an agent of Time, and Time is the servant of Eternity. In the Eternal there is changelessness. We need death and Time in order to achieve it.

11. *The greater the suffering, the deeper the compassion.*

The purpose of suffering is in large measure to achieve compassion. We do not know how to suffer until and unless we become more tender, more understanding. We only think of suffering as something to be got rid of as quickly as possible. Rather is it something to be cherished while it has a lesson to teach.

12. *The simpler the life, the nearer to Truth.*

Simplicity, as we ought to know, is supreme truthfulness. There are, of

course, many ways of living simply. We must choose, to begin with, the simplicity most available and then add simplicity after simplicity until our life becomes so beautifully simple that it is profoundly true.

13. *The higher we climb, the finer the view.*

Climbing is worthwhile because of the view to be seen from the summit.

14. *The greater the sacrifice, the more lasting the happiness.*

Only as one makes constant sacrifice with joy and gladness and affection, with no thought of sacrifice, can one really be happy.

15. *The straighter the way, the nearer the goal.*

The application of this aphorism sometimes means iconoclasm and the breaking down of obstacles instead of going round them or over them, or even of taking them with one, metamorphosed !

16. *The less the desire, the greater the contentment.*

The more we desire the more we generally want. We have all things if we desire no thing.

17. *The more fiercely we hate, the more hateful we become.*

The key to the aphorism is in the word "hateful." It has its two meanings—full of hate, and hateful to others.

18. *The less we are silent, the more ignorant we remain.*

This is a profound truth, for we only really grow as we are able to listen to the voices in the Silence. These are the voices that teach us.

19. *The more we imagine, the greater the danger; the less we imagine, the slower we grow.*

Here we have the horns of a dilemma. But perhaps the solution lies in the truth that we must use the imagination and not abuse it.

20. *The more we are lonely, the less are we alone.*

Loneliness is always an illusion, a maya. We feel lonely because we do not feel God's presence, and yet He is nearer to us than aught else.

21. *The more we see faults in others, the more we have faults in ourselves.*

We must be able to see both the faults and the qualities in others, then we can help them. If we see no faults in others, then we cannot help them as we might. And if we can see faults in others, we ought to be able to see faults in ourselves. If we know ourselves well, we ought to be able to know others well.

22. *The nearer to animals, the closer to God.*

I sometimes think that animals are nearer to God than we are. We have to learn to stand alone almost as if we were Godless, which of course we are not. But animals have not yet this lesson to learn. They need to be as close to God as

possible, and indeed are they close. We have to learn that we *are* God. Then are we most near to Him. So is it good for us to be very near to these God-near animals. They remind us of God just when we have to learn to do without crutches.

23. *The more we dwell amidst the conflicts of contrasts the sooner do the storms drive us into the harbour of victory.*

No one can do without storms for very long. He may not have them in some particular incarnation, but sooner or later they must shake him out of his static self into his dynamic self. No victory can be achieved without a storm. Storms are the price of victory. So is it that storms help us into our harbours, both the storms within us and those without.

THE FIVE POINTS OF OUR FELLOWSHIP

TO avoid the dangers to which so many God-given but eventually man-desecrated movements have succumbed, it seems to me that many of us Theosophists might well observe the following precautions :

1. Not to allow to be developed any organisation whereby form comes to mean far more than life.

2. Not to allow to be developed in any organisation a hierarchy—an

individual or group of individuals—which might become an essential intermediary between ourselves and Truth.

3. Not to allow our Theosophy and its expression to become increasingly ornate, complex, or ceremonial.

4. Not to allow any dogmas, creeds, or doctrines to be any test whatever as to Theosophical righteousness.

5. To take care to ensure to each member freedom to go his own individual way of life in an ardent spirit of Universal Brotherhood, to accept or reject authority, to accept or reject forms and ceremonies, to follow his own Theosophy as he may have garnered it from Theosophy ; but ever to honour others as they tread their different ways. There must be no

cornering in Theosophy nor in The Theosophical Society. No one must declare that such and such is the only true Theosophy, or that such and such is the only true method of conducting The Theosophical Society.

The freedom of the individual member is the strength of The Theosophical Society.

The brotherhood of the Individual member is the soul of The Theosophical Society.

FROM PESSIMISM TO OPTIMISM

AS dawn succeeds dawn in these times of darkness, each new day, whatever else it brings, brings its hammer-blow of disappointment and sense of frustration.

But, as day after day is fraught with these, I try to fortify myself with the thought that only because in no other way can the new world succeed the old world is there no alternative but our present lot.

We are heading for Victory, say those who at present dominate the world and its nations. We are beating Germany and Italy and Japan. No doubt. But, I ask, what are we going to do with Victory when we get it?

We shall move more quickly on the road to Victory if we feel sure that the Victory will be well worth the terrible price we are having to pay for it in sufferings of all kinds.

I may be thrilled as I read about the almost superhuman production of the munitions of war—the aeroplanes, the tanks, the guns, the ships, and all the other paraphernalia of destruction.

But in the midst of the thrill is there the disquieting realization that each of

them is a messenger of suffering and despair, and is constructed for that very purpose !

Every additional tank and gun and aeroplane and rifle and ship means more unhappiness, however much nearer it may bring us to the so-called Victory.

This mounting unhappiness may be the price we have to pay for what we must hope will be the mounting happiness of the future. But shall we get that happiness out of the Victory in which we are all placing our trust ?

First let us achieve the Victory, say some, only then shall we be in a position to know what to do with it.

It is true that at all costs we must have Victory over the barbarian instruments of

evil which have enslaved the German, Italian and Japanese peoples to further the designs of evil. We must defeat them and draw their poisonous fangs for ever.

But we are not only fighting for this particular purpose. We are fighting to right wrong everywhere, and so to usher in a new world of peace and contentment for all.

This is the great Coming Event which Victory must make certain, not only when the peace terms are settled, but even in anticipation from now. This Coming Event must cast its brightness before.

I look everywhere in India in vain for one small single sign of this Coming Event. I see promises. But I see no beginnings whatever of their performance, not even

the slightest shadow of the advent of the Coming Event.

Everywhere the world is talking and writing of Freedom, and of all the wonders that are going to happen when. . .

Everywhere, let us hope, the real world is fighting for Freedom.

But nowhere do I see Freedom beginning to operate now, not even where its actual beginnings might strengthen the fighting and ensure an earlier Victory.

Is all this a tale of woe and a wail of despondency? In a way it is, especially in relation to India.

India was the love of my youth. She has been the object of my devotion during all the years intervening between

youth and age. I have been hoping and hoping that Swâraj was about to come. Vain has been every hope. And now in what is almost my old age Swâraj is further off than ever. Will it even come when the war is over? I perceive for this no certainty whatever.

How sad it is that India and Britain are so ill-served by their respective leaders. At the very time when Mr. Gandhi might have given priceless service to India by way of uniting her peoples and of working for the removal of her people's miseries, he has allowed himself to be shut up in gaol with some eminent fellow-leaders—unavailable when they are most urgently needed. Outside the gaol only confusion and indecision.

At the very time when Britain's leaders might have seized tremendous opportunities to build a great comradeship between the eastern and western lands, they missed them one after another.

They seem to keep on missing these God-given opportunities, the while Mr. Jinnah arrogantly, but in obvious diminuendo from the standpoint of the public interest, beats his Pakistan drum.

What a tragic and dangerous muddle it all is. Britain moving complacently on her way, India groaning with destitution and helplessly impotent, and both in the grips of a war which must be won.

The end of it? God alone knows. I do not, whatever be the loud-voiced

determinations and assurances of India and Britain respectively.

But what have *I* to do—I who love both India and Britain with a single, ardent patriotism? Within my small powers I ridiculously try to shake both India and Britain into playing together what is without any doubt, on my part, their joint game—the game they must learn to play together for their own sakes and for the sake of the world.

What conceit, is it not? But I go on the principle that Truth shall sooner or later prevail, and, possessing, as I think, a modicum of Truth applicable to each country, I send it forth to add its little obscure light to the dispelling of darkness.

Can I do more? Oh! that is the question which insistently troubles me. But I am in honour bound to do the little I am actually doing. And as I write this, I say I can do more. I am sure we all can do more. How few people are doing *all* that they can.

I do not think that any really earnest worker would be afraid of going to gaol. Many of the very best people have, throughout the ages, gone to gaol. I do not know what the world would do, or would have done, without its birds of the gaol. In these days of conflict there must be those who are willing and happy to be members of the flock. Not that I place them in lofty contrast with those who send them to gaol. When, in 1917,

I was interned by the Madras Government, presumably for "subversive" activities under the inspiring guidance and example of Dr. Besant, I told the high officials of the C.I.D. who came to inform us of our fate that they were as right to follow their duty as we were to follow ours. The results were unpleasant for us, but that could not be helped. And they certainly made us as comfortable as they could.

But gaol is not my policy. I can never forget that this world war must be won. We dare not lose it. And if I do anything by way of criticism—morbid or otherwise—of India or Britain believe it or not it is to speed up this war-winning business.

Wonderful efforts are being made to win it. The sacrifices being made are almost

incredible. Look at China. Look at Russia Look at Poland. Look at Britain. Look at the very real heroism of every combatant, of every participant in the business of the war. Marvellous I call it. But I think that much more might be done if only Britain and India could enter the comradeship for which they are intended. A really hearty cooperation between the two would have prevented war in the first instance and would effect a veritable miracle now.

Why, look at Russia and the United States and Britain in what I pray is happy conclave in Moscow, and now in Teheran. If, under the pressure of circumstances, these three can come together, why for God's sake cannot Britain and India, already bound together as they are?

I began this article on a note of pessimism, and am afraid it must still sound so. What are we going to do with the Victory when we get it, I repeat?

Yet would I fain believe that through the note of pessimism there reverberates that music which shall drown all sinister notes—the music of optimism, the certainty that somehow, in God's own time, the end of all this will be the triumph of the good over the evil.

The world will someday be happier than it has ever been before. India and Britain will be equal comrades as they have never been before. The poison will pass from the systems of Germany, Italy and Japan, if at all they are able to survive. All peoples will dwell in the spirit of Universal

Brotherhood. Religions will treat each other with respect, recognizing the one source whence all are derived.

Still, ere all this will happen, there are many rivers of misunderstanding to cross, and we have not yet built the necessary bridges.

My pessimism is that these bridges have not yet been built and that so far there are no signs of their building. On the contrary, efforts to build them are being constantly frustrated.

My optimism is that these bridges will be built, and I cling to this apparently unjustifiable optimism because God is Love and Justice, and will see His struggling family through their present tribulations.

HEALING RECONSTRUCTION

THE watchword for all Theosophists who are applying Theosophy to the rebuilding of the world is not just Reconstruction but Healing Reconstruction. The whole world is wounded and ill, be it in the war zones or where still untouched by the ravages of war.

The wounds and the disease may be more marked where the war has taken its savage toll of all that makes for happiness in living. But everywhere there is the unrest of ill-health.

Until the whole world is well again there can be no real growth, no real peace, no real contentment.

There is no more potent healing balm than Theosophy, for Theosophy arrests decay and vitalises the tissues of a new life.

But there can be no Reconstruction in which there is no Healing, and in order to heal all that makes for disease must be routed—the spirit of hatred, of suspicion, of distrust, of revenge, of aggression, of greed. It is useless to imagine that a veneer of health may be spread over disease lurking underneath.

Hence Reconstruction means, first the purification of the wounds and the healing of the disease, and second the building,

on the foundations thus purified, of a Brotherhood House in which all nations and peoples shall dwell together in harmony and co-operation. The building of such a House will take time, but it must be planned and, if possible, the construction work be begun as part of the results of the Peace Conference itself. Each nation must declare the kind of accommodation it requires, and be suitably provided, having regard to the essential need for a harmonious structure.

But the substitution of goodwill for ill-will must come first, or Brotherhood House will be built upon sand instead of being enduringly based on rock.

Theosophists should specially be expert, I think are, in laying such foundations, for

they have been trained to lay the foundations of Brotherhood at least ever since they joined The Theosophical Society and even before, when the Heaven of Theosophy was opened to their inner eyes.

Theosophists are architects and masons, especially expert, I repeat, in planning and foundation-laying.

They are much in demand at the present time, for the Master-Builders call them to a common work.

Let all who are called, and is there a Theosophist who is not called, be busy about plan-making and foundation-laying for the emergence of a new world.

A beautiful new world must have a Theosophical foundation.

A SEBASTIANED WORLD!

[St. Sebastian, commander of a cohort, was martyred in the tremendous persecution of Christians under Diocletian for helping Christian prisoners in Rome and for converting the prefect of the city. Diocletian ordered him to be shot and he was left for dead, his body bristling with arrows, as he is shown in art.]

WHAT an uncompromising world it is! A world bludgeoned by conflicting authorities, self-styled. A world sebastianed by the sharp arrows of haughty

dogmas, doctrines and creeds. A world imprisoned in conventions, habits, customs and orthodoxies. A world divided against itself into colour-camps, race-camps, faith-camps, nation-camps. A world of tyranny of wealth over poverty, of the strong over the weak, of the prosperous over the miserable, of the elders over the younger, of passion over self-control, of pride and prejudice over simplicity and worth.

And yet in the midst of all this arrogance and tyranny is heard a universal Call for Release. All these atrocities cannot last, for they are foreign to Life. They would kill Life, and Life cannot be killed. Throughout the history of the world wrong has never lasted. Men have ever risen in rebellion against it and have

over and over again conquered its temporary manifestations, even though many a time and oft it has reared its cruel form in the vain attempt to stop the progress of civilisation.

Wrong has stalked abroad in the two Great Wars which have recently afflicted the world. It has stalked abroad in innumerable onslaughts on compassion, justice and freedom. But the Cry for Release is once more heard, and wrong will once more hide away until the ignorance-iniquities of man again call it forth, as they have called it forth to work its awful evil in these very days of ours.

The Call is, of course, for release from ignorance, for it is ignorance and blindness which bring darkness upon the world. It

is ignorance that breeds the cold, hard doctrines and creeds and dogmas of religion. It is ignorance that breeds the narrow, enslaving, habits, customs, conventions and orthodoxies. It is ignorance that breeds all prejudices and divisions. It is ignorance that breeds tyranny, hatred, cruelty, pride.

I pray that some measure of Release may come to all as the New World is born out of the old. But as I think of the suffering that evokes the Call for Release, I see that it is the very suffering itself which brings release. Evil cannot last, neither can suffering. And the time must always come when at last the accumulating pressure of wrong and suffering bursts open the doorways of Release, even if only into an oblivion.

The time is now at hand, the hour is now striking, for a period of Release. There will be a Release for peoples and nations, for faiths and individuals.

The spirit of the Founder will be reborn in and give new life to every religion.

The spirit of Freedom will awaken and arouse every subject nation.

The spirit of Duty will awaken and stir to righteousness nations shackled in pride.

The spirit of Justice will arise to protect all voiceless creatures from the cruelty and selfishness of man.

The spirit of the Love of God, which is the spirit of Brotherhood, will begin to reign among God's creatures, human and sub-human.

And in the heart of every individual there will be a peace he has not known for long.

So will a Golden Age be ushered in to run its course till mankind forgets once more—and then again an Age of Darkness.

But the Time shall come when there will be no more night.

UNTIL. . . . ?

ON December 1st, 1943 I shall have begun my 66th year. Well, it does not sound so very old, after all. When I am 66 I am certainly elderly, but I am not yet old—at least that is how I look at it, though some people will, of course, class me among the old, while young people will deem me quite pre-historic. I remember how some of my small pupils in the Central Hindu College regarded me as an old man when after all I was only thirty years of age !

Nevertheless, in four years time, D. V., I shall be 70 years old, and that will be old, even though I shall be calling myself "70 years young."

Now, at 66 years of age—a somewhat different proposition from 70 years old—I do not even feel elderly, so I am thinking that at 70 I shall at the most feel not so young. I do not think I shall ever feel old, and I shall be right, for evolution is that we may become younger incarnation after incarnation until the spirit of Eternal Youth is achieved. And even to feel elderly is to have become confused between increasing age in terms of years and increasing youth in terms of the spirit.

Of course, the actual physical body deteriorates. I have the physical disabilities

of physical age. My physical movements are more stiff, and sitting down is preferable to standing up. Physically I am more sluggish. But emphatically I do not find my feelings and emotions, nor my mind, nor any other functioning of my consciousness, to be in like case. *I* feel as alert as ever I have done in feelings, emotions and mind. I feel more alert, for all these are now able to touch heights and contact depths which they could not have done before sixty, nor did until within the last year or so.

I am having the very proper experience of growing younger in them all, that is of greater freedom of movement in them, of greater subtleties in them, than I have so far known.

I would not give up a year of my age unless I could be younger in physical age. I have no envy for youth, save for those who are young in spirit and who are full of that precious *elan vital* and *joie de vivre*. I should like to be more virile in physical years if I could retain my present emotional and mental and other contents —improving them, enlarging them, deepening them, of course.

And as I myself feel, so do I suppose others feel who are in their fifties and sixties and seventies. I see people who are old in appearance, and I say to myself that probably they are feeling just as I am feeling—young. I cannot imagine anyone feeling old, outworn, decrepit, fit for nothing, unless he has led a miserable life in

the course of which his feelings and his mind, as well as his physical body, have become so exhausted that he simply cannot use them any more.

I make bold to say—it is for others to contradict me—that I do not feel in the least degree worn out. On the contrary, I feel more sensitive than before, which is to say more at one than ever before with life around me. My own recent illness with its attendant suffering has gained for me re-entry into the kingdom of suffering, and in this kingdom I seem to have made friends with everyone of its citizens The result of this conferment upon me of the citizenship of suffering is that I feel very close to suffering. It has instantaneous contact with me as it comes within

my orbit of forthgoing, and I experience the suffering almost as if I actually had it myself, but of course not quite.

It all exemplifies the distinction between the Buddhic and the Nirvanic consciousness. In the one case we have to go forth to discover and contact the unity. In the other case we experience the unity within ourselves.

I contact suffering as it makes itself known to me through my forthgoing. I cannot yet experience all suffering within myself without any going forth whatever. This will take incarnations, many of them. But I am adding to the treasury of my unfoldment even now, and I see no reason why I should not add to it at 70 and 80 and 90, and beyond.

The physical body may be losing its elasticity. It is. But I will say that my other bodies are wearing well. Perhaps it is because I am approaching a Heaven world which may be awaiting me on the other side of the doors of physical death —coming events casting their shadows before. Somehow or other I do not think this is the only cause. I think the fundamental reason is that Theosophy tends to eternalise us and endow us with the spirit of Youth. Theosophy admits us to the Real, and the longer we dwell in Theosophy the more real do we become.

Furthermore, Theosophy and our membership of The Theosophical Society admit us to the company of the Just Men made Perfect—Those who already are eternally

young, and in Their midst we ourselves acquire youth. We begin to learn how to be young, however old we may be.

So at 66 years of age I feel full of vim and vitamins, and I look forward to feeling the same at 70 years of age and at 80 years of age, in fact for so long as I live. And since I, like everybody else, shall live for ever, my vim and vitamins, already filling me to the brim, will fill me to overflowing, and will cry aloud for a larger "me" to accommodate their growing numbers and intensity.

Well, larger and larger "me's" will be forthcoming. My cloth will increase in quantity as my coat clamours to be enlarged. At 66 I am filled to the brim. At 70 I pray I may also be filled to the

brim—the brim having grown wider in the meantime. And so on and on with ever-widening brims until . . . but I think there is no "until" in the dictionary of evolution.

TAKE THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BY STORM

IT is really the only way. If we want our Heavens we must storm them. There are very few Heavens to be had just for the asking.

But most of us are not storm-people. We do not like storms. We do our best to avoid them. There is almost a "peace at any price" spirit about us, unless something drives us, willy-nilly, into storm regions, when we shall either ourselves become stormy in them or shrink into

our small selves until the storms have blown over.

If we are shrinkers we shall not know much about Heavens, save those which cost nothing to enter, and such Heavens neither last long nor do they thrill as real Heavens do.

If, on the other hand, the storm-spirit dwells in us even if only to a small degree we shall know real Heavens, the admission-fee to which is conquest by storm.

People are apt to jog along when they should burst along. They say "I can't" when they should declare "I will." "Impossible" is a very prominent word in their dictionaries of living, and for lethargy's sake they justify their inactivity on the ground of temperament.

"I wish I could go to Heaven" they wail impotently, and the reply that there are plenty of Heavens round about them, not a stone's throw away, if they really want to go to Heaven, frightens them. What they mean is that they want effortlessly to float into Heaven, to find themselves in Heaven without lifting a finger to get there. They want a cheap Heaven, in fact a Heaven which is given away for nothing.

People sometimes come to me and say they want to serve me. "Is there anything I can do to help you?" And then they add the damning phrase: "But I am afraid I have no capacity. I was not brought up to do anything practically useful, and the things you need are just the things I cannot do. Alas! Alas!"

It does not seem to occur to them that if they really want to help me they will see to it that they learn how to do something I really want done. I am afraid their eagerness and sincerity do not go very deep down. They would like to help if it is not too much trouble to them. But if the helping means hard work and strenuous preparation, then the desire fades away, with the only compensation of a feeling of sadness that the privilege of helping is not vouchsafed to them.

They may put it down to adverse karma, and they will piously hope that the next life will afford them the opportunities denied to them in this.

They little realize that the process of stultification must have begun long, long

ago, that they are in the midst of it now, and in all likelihood will be in the midst of it for many lives to come until the "won't" which is the cause of the "can't" gives way to the "will" which is the father of "can."

I know in my own case, and in the case of some of my colleagues, that there are fifty and one things I want done, and people round me are saying: "If only I could, but I can't." And I smile to think how accessible to them are the circumstances they call "Heaven" if only they would take them by storm.

In truth, they are prisoners within the walls of all the things they can do with ease, prisoners in cheap Heavens, when they ought to be free and stormy

with the joy of difficult achievement, of taking some seemingly inaccessible, but marvellous, kingdom by storm, and then exulting in the glories of the conquered heights.

There are people to tell us they are tremendously happy in their work. They could not wish for any other. So be it. Maybe their work is their Heaven. But with all of us there is somewhere a Divine Discontent which refuses us for long any contentment in any particular Heaven, hurries us into Heaven after Heaven as we become Divinely stormy, and only finds its Divine Goal in leading us at last into our own hearts where lies the final Heaven awaiting our assault—the Heaven of all Heavens whence we need to go

forth no more on voyages of stormy seeking and discovery.

As yet we have only stormed one Heaven after another, slowly, and as if each Heaven were final. We have achieved the Heavens into which we enter. We have still to achieve the Heaven that each one of us is. But to know the one supreme and only Heaven, the Heaven which is the master-key to all Heavens, we must first know a hundred, nay a thousand, Heavens. And at present we know so very few, because we are afraid to know any more. We are still complacently static when we might be ardently dynamic.

My own experience tells me that the deepest happiness is to be found, and to

be found alone, in adding to my collection of Heavens, not in being content to dwell within their still narrow frontiers.

What I have I must hold, but what I have not I must win or be ready to win.

Up to a certain point, and at a certain stage of evolution, we may pick and choose our Heavens or lie asleep in a particular Heaven. We may, and should, perhaps, collect those Devachans to which we so much look forward as to elysia, but which the exigencies of our service may not allow us to enjoy.

But the time must come when Heavens will pick and choose us, demanding that we shall stormily conquer them, to our infinite exhilaration, and in each of them we shall for a time be supremely happy

and dynamic; while at long last all the worlds will be Heaven and there will reign forever the life-giving storm of Peace.

For the moment and for very many moments we must arise to conquer. We must be eager for Heavens, not in the soporific of futile words but in the storm of dauntless deeds. If we long for any Heaven we must from now be intent upon tempestuous and irresistible ways and means of taking it by storm, with patience but indomitably.

"How I wish I could. . . ." Then why not begin to "can" from now? Lay the foundations. Sow the seeds. Brook no obstacles. Fear no difficulties in the way.

You want to help, to serve? Then learn how and now to help and how to serve. You are not wanted? Then work so that you will be wanted.

Above all, do not make conditions of your service. I will do this. I will not do that. I can do this. I cannot do that.

Do not require of the object of your eagerness—work or person—that there shall be a conforming to your tempo and inclinations. Fit yourself. Do not demand an apartment furnished to suit your convenience.

How few there are anywhere who really want to help. They want to be helped by being given a Heaven which will fit them just exactly as they are. The

Heaven-giver must adopt a Heaven to them. They cannot and probably will not change, neither their capacities by adding to them, nor their opinions by modifying them.

For the most part we have to find out what people can do, and then confine some work within their limitations—their various beds of Procustes. When will the time come for people to find out what needs doing and then to transcend their limitations in order to do it?

This is taking the Kingdom of Heaven by storm. There is no real Heaven which can be taken otherwise than by storm.

Is it necessary to add that only a Storm of Love will ever give access to a Heaven of Benediction?

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